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ABSTRACT

This report by the BRS (Bibliographic Retrieval Services) Committee, which was formed to identify costs and benefits of joining BRS, provides a summary of anticipated use of the BRS system and projected savings, and recommendations to the library on joining BRS. The majority of the report comprises seven appendices: (1) a comparison of search system features for BRS, DIALOG, and CAN/OLE (Canadian On Line Enquiry); (2) a summary of databases available and unique to BRS, identifying hourly rates, dates available, and interest areas; (3) a comparison of costs and availability for databases on BRS and systems currently used at Concordia; (4) a list of seven information sources consulted to produce the three preceding appendices; (5) detailed estimates of the anticipated yearly BRS use, indicating numbers of hours per year for databases unique to BRS and databases currently searched on other systems; (6) detailed estimates of anticipated yearly BRS connect time savings by database for both 60 and 120 contract hours; and (7) detailed estimates of anticipated yearly BRS offline print savings, including charge difference per citation per abstract for DIA/CAN/OLE and BRS. (RBF)

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BRS STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Prepared by: J. Tallon

Date: March 12, 1982

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1. Description of Committee and Procedures Followed

The BRS Study Committee was created as the result of a meeting held on October 20, 1981 to plan for a review and evaluation of data base searching in the Libraries. Membership was established as follows: J. Appleby, D. Maharaj, A. Tabah and J. Tallon (chairman). The mandate of the committee was: "to present conditions of joining BRS with analysis of costs and benefits".

Prior to meeting,Committee members attended a BRS information session at McGill University. Following this the Committee prepared a comparison of search system features for BRS, DIALOG, and CAN/OLE (Appendix I), a list of databases available on BRS and unique to this system (Appendix II), and comparisons of cost and availability for databases on BRS and systems used at present at Concordia (Appendix III). The latter table compares BRS and the system most frequently used for searching a particular database at Concordia, and omits databases that are infrequently used. Information sources consulted in producing the above mentioned tables are given in Appendix IV.

Based on information gathered to this point Committee members consulted computer search librarians and department heads to determine:

1. Receptiveness to use of BRS rather than systems currently used for searching databases in their subject area, given cost and system differences.

2. Potential additional use of databases unique to the BRS system.

Based on responses received and statistics compiled on individual database use in the period June 1980 - May 31, 1981 the Committee prepared an estimate of our anticipated BRS usage in a one year period (detailed estimates are given in Appendix V).

In order to minimize the chance that we would recommend that the Library contact for more hours then would actually be used all decisions relative to the collection and interpretation of these figures were made with a strong conservative bias.

The estimates of BRS usage for databases presently searched on other systems were used to prepare an estimate of savings (connect time), based on the 1980-81 level of use, that will be realized yearly on BRS (detailed estimates given in Appendix VI). In addition savings in offline print costs were estimated based on 1980-81 print statistics (Appendix VII). All savings were calculated in U.S. dollars, and as with usage estimates a conservative approach was taken.

2. Summary of anticipated use and savings

1. Yearly use of the BRS system is conservatively estimated at 115.3 hours, based on computer searches over the period June 1, 1980 to Mav 31, 1981. This includes 15 hours on databases unique to BRS and 100.3 hours on databases currently searched on either DIALOG or CAN/OLE.

2. Based on 1980-81 use statistics estimated savings to be realized by switching to BRS are as follows:

Hourly charges:

1. 60 hour minimum subscription (base rate $25/hour) US $700

2. 120 hour " " (" " $20/hour) US $1219

3. 240 hour " " (" " $16/hour) US $1634

Offline Print charges	US $1268
Total savings	US $1968 - 2902

Purchase of the 120 hour contract as recommended below will result in an estimated saving of US $2487 (Canadian $2860). Relative to our preliminary estimate of $12,000 total search costs in 1980-81 (statistics compiled by the Data Base Charging Formula Committee) this would represent a saving of almost 25% in total vendor charges.

3. A number of discount plans are offered by DIALOG, including the discount automatically applied to our accounts and resulting in negligible savings. The maximum discount that could have been realized through DIALOG in 1980-81 is US $500, however this would have required that a single password/account number be used.

4. First year savings would be reduced by set up costs including training, manuals and database guides.

3. Recommendations

The Committee recommends:

1. That the Library subscribe to BRS as of June 1, 1982, with training to be arranged for all search librarians, and searchers in other Library departments, shortly prior to or immediately following this date.

3. Recommendations (continued)

2. That the Library adopt the policy that computer searches should normally be performed on BRS in preference to another system which hosts a required database.

3. That the Library initially subscribe to a minimum contract of 120 hours per year. Although this is higher than the 115 hours estimated annual use it would be more economical than the next lowest subscription category even if the Library failed to use up to 25 hours (25 hours X $20 base rate = $500 = additional discount:120 hour subscription over 60 hour subscription).

   Since in addition conservative procedures were used in producing the use estimate, and use should increase because of lower BRS charges, this would seem to involve little risk.

4. It is not recommended that the Library attempt to share a subscription with another institution at this time. The main drawback to a shared subscription is that a maximum of 5 passwords are available. It is felt that four passwords are highly desirable for the Concordia libraries in order to avoid having to coordinate the scheduling of searches between libraries. This requirement would seem to rule out a cooperative arrangement, at least in our present situation where we estimate an additional 120 hours are required to bring us to the next subscription level (240 hours, base rate $16).

   BRS also has group contracts with unlimited passwords for consortia guaranteeing 1200 hours per year, e.g. OCLC, and the possibility of organizing this type of arrangement should be explored in future.

APPENDIX I

Comparison of Search System Features - BRS/DIALOG/CANOLE

Features/systems	BRS	DIALOG	CAN/OLE
search command	none	s, ss	s, s( ), and/or
field qualifiers	consistent	inconsistent	consistent
*full text searching	can specify adjacency of terms & sets; use with boolean logic	specify adjacency terms, #interviewing words	string search
transaction	yes, ($3)	yes(?????)	yes - except with adjacency, cannot specify # letters
print format	flexible	rigid	flexible
merging citations	yes	no	no
recovery	same day	10 min.	no
level of system activity given	yes	no	not really
*after the fact qualification	yes	no	no
online user accounting system	- current mo. & year to date	no	no

APPENDIX II

Summary of databases available on BRS and unique to this system.

hourly rate (royalties)	database	dates available	interest areas
	Alcohol Use/Abuse	1968+	psychology
	Social aspects of alcoholism		sociology
$70	American Men & Women of Science	annual	science
$5	Bilingual Education & Bibliographic Abstracts		education TESL
$40	Books in Print - (forthcoming, paperback)	1979	
$15	Books info		
$20 flat rate	CULP (California Union list of Periodicals)		ILL
$40 flat rate	Dow Jones	1979-	doesn't apply to subscription
$5	Druginfo	1968-	sociology psychology
$25	Family Resources	1971-	sociology psychology
	Financial Times of London	1981-	commerce
$5	MEDOC	1976-	
	NARIC	1956-	exercise science
	New York Times Information Bank		-not apply to subscriptions - separate arrangement
	NIMH (Pre-Psych)	1969-81 (81-)	psychology sociology
$60 flat rate	Patents: Patclass & Patsearch	1836-Patclass 1971-Patsearch	science
	Pre-Med	current	psychology
$25	School Practices Information File		education
$20	State Publications Index	1976-	Gov.Pub.
$40	Ulrich's International	annual	
$10	USBE Most Available Titles	annual	serials

APPENDIX III

Database comparisons - BRS and alternative used most frequently.

database	period (on-line/ offline)-BRS	period (DIA./ CAN)	cost-BRS $US	cost(DIA/CAN) $US
BIOSIS	1978+/1970-77	1972-(CAN) 2 files	$20 + BRS	$50 (CAN)
CA CONDENSATES	na/1970-76	1973-78 (CAN)	$30 + BRS	$52 (CAN)
CA SEARCH	1977+/n.a.	1979- (CAN)	$30 + BRS	$52 (CAN)
COMPENDEX	1976+/n.a.	1970- (CAN)	$25 + BRS	$59 (CAN)
DISS. ABSTRACTS	1861+/n.a.	1861- (DIA	150% BRS	$55 (DIA)
ERIC	1966+/n.a.	1966-(DIA)	BRS	$25 (DIA)
ECER	1966+/n.a.	1966-(DIA)	$5+ BRS	$25 (DIA)
GPO Monthly cat.	1976+/n.a.	1976 - (DIA)	BRS	$35 (DIA)
INFORM	1971+/n.a.	1971- (DIA)	$35 + BRS	$73 (DIA)
INSPEC	1977+/1970-76 n.d.	1970- (CAN)	$30 + BRS	$69 U.S. (CAN)
MGT CONTENTS	1974+/n.a.	1974-(DIA)	$35 + BRS	$75 (DIA)
MEDLARS	1979+/1966-78 1977-78 1975-76	1966- (DIA) (3 files-1966-74 75-79 1980-)	$10 flat rate	$35 (DIA)
NTIS	1975+/n.a. 1970-74	1971- (CAN)	$8 + BRS $8 + BRS	$42 U.S. (CAN)
PAIS	1972+/n.a.	1972- (DIA)	$20 + BRS	$60 (DIA)
PREDICASTS/F&S	1976+/n.a. 1972-75	1972-78 (DIA) 1979 - (DIA)	$39 + BRS	$90 (DIA) $90 (DIA)
PREDICASTS/PROMT	1976-/n.a.	1972- (DIA)	$39 + BRS	$90 (DIA)
PSYCH ABSTRACTS	1967+/n.a.	1967-	$30 + BRS	$65 (DIA)
SCI	1980+/n.a.	1965-69 (DIA) 1970-73 1974-77 1978-80 1981-	$22 + BRS	$65 (DIA) " " " "
SSCI	1977+/1972-76	1972- (DIA)	$35 + BRS	$75 (DIA)
SSIE	1977+/n.a.	last 2 years (DIA)	$30 + BRS	$78 (DIA)

APPENDIX IV

Information Sources Consulted

1. "CAN/OLE Rate Schedule", January 1, 1982.

2. "BRS Rate Schedule", October 1981.

3. "Price List (DIALOG)", April, 1981.

4. "Database Catalog (DIALOG)", May 1981.

5. DIALOG and BRS Customer Services and BRS users at McGill were consulted in order to obtain additional information and user impressions.

6. "A Comparative Review of BRS, DIALOG and ORBIT", Laura G. Harper, RSR, Jan-March 1981, pp. 39-50.

7. "BRS Search System Description", May 1980, "BRS Brief System Guide", n.d., and various other BRS promotional materials.

APPENDIX V

Detailed Estimates - anticipated yearly BRS use

1: Databases unique to BRS

DATABASE	Expected Use	Estimate of hours/ Year Use
Alcohol Use/Abuse	light	1 hr
Social aspects of alcoholism	"	1 hr
American Men & Women of Science	"	1 hr
Bilingual Education & Bibliographic Abstracts	"	1 hr
Books in Print - (forthcoming, paperback)	"	1 hr
Books info	seldom	0 hr
CULP (California Union list of Periodicals	"	0 hr
Dow Jones	light	1 hr
Druginfo	"	1 hr
Family Resources	"	1 hr
Financial Times of London	seldom	0 hr
MEDOC	light	1 hr
New York Times Information Bank	N/A	
NIMH (Pre-Psych)	light	1 hr
Patents: Patclass & Patsearch	light	1 hr
Pre-Med	light	1 hr
School Practices Information File	seldom	0 hr
State Publications Index	"	0 hr
Ulrich's International	light	1 hr
USBE Most Available Titles (Estimates Acquisitions Use)	-	2 hrs
TOTAL		15 hrs.

APPENDIX V

Detailed Estimates - anticipated yearly BRS use

2: Databases currently searched on other systems

Database	Estimated number of hours/year use*
BIOSIS	13.6
CA CONDENSATES	0.6
CA SEARCH	4.0
COMPENDEX	6.6
DISS. ABSTRACTS	2.6
ERIC	30.5
ECER	0.3
GPO Monthly cat	0.1
INFORM	9.4
INSPEC	6.5
MGT CONTENTS	3.8
NTIS	2.9
PAIS	1.1
PREDICASTS/F&S	1.2
PREDICASTS/PROM	.2
PSYCH ABSTRACTS	10.4
SCI	1.3
SSCI	5.2
TOTAL	100.3

* Based on 1980-81 use. Drummond hours not included.

APPENDIX VI

Detailed estimates - anticipated yearly BRS connect time savings

Database	Savings ($U.S.) with a contract for 60 hours	Savings ($U.S.) with a contract for 120 hours
BIOSIS	68	136
CA CONSENSATES	(2)	1
CA SEARCH	(12)	8
COMPENDEX	59	92
DISS. ABSTRACTS	46	65
ERIC	0	153
ECER	(2)	0
GOP Monthly cat	1	2
INFORM	122	169
INSPEC	91	123
MGT CONTENTS	57	76
NTIS	26	40
PAIS	17	22
PREDICASTS/F&S	31	37
PREDICASTS /PROM	5	6
PSYCH ABSTRACTS	104	156
SCI	10	29
SSCI	78	104
Total estimated savings ($U.S)	699	1219

APPENDIX VII

Detailed estimates - anticipated yearly BRS offline print savings

	PRINTS (1980-81)	Charge per citation/abstract ($U.S)*			Anticipated savings ($U.S)
		DIA /CAN/OLE	BRS	DIFFERENCE	
ERIC	4801	10	4	6	288
SSCI	867	10	4.6	5.4	46.8
Psych Info	3094	10	4	6	185.6
DA	185	12	1.6	10.4	19.2
SCI	42	10	4.6	5.4	2.3
Inform	1649	30	24	6	98.8
Management	476	15	9	6	28.6
NTIS	543	3.0	1.6	1.4	7.60
BIOSIS	4396	3.0	1.6	1.4	61.5
PAIS	453	15	9	6	27.1
Compender	1452	13.0	11.6	1.4	18.9
ECER	11	10	4	6	.7
CA Cond	531	13.0	9.6	3.4	18.1
CA Search		13.0	9.6	3.4	
Haspee	7627	18.0	11.6	6.4	465.1
			Total anticipated savings		1268.4

* Charge per citation given for most commonly used search system for database (DIALOG or CAN/OLE). Cost is with abstract for databases on which offline prints with abstracts are most common. Includes base rate and royalties.